

Dear Friends:

Both of my parents are senior citizens. My father is in a nursing home in Olympia. I'm in touch with senior citizen issues on a daily basis. I care very much about issues affecting seniors.

This year the state Legislature passed several bills important to senior citizens. I'd like to inform you of these bills and also encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. As always, it is an honor to be your representative.

Sincerely,



State Rep. Steve Van Luven – District 48  
Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah

**Write:** 330 O'Brien Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

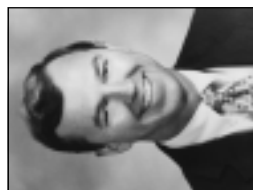
**E-mail:** [vanluven\\_st@leg.wa.gov](mailto:vanluven_st@leg.wa.gov)

**Call:** (425) 453-3037  
(In District)  
(360) 786-7848  
(Olympia office)  
or 1-800-562-6000  
(Toll-free Hotline)

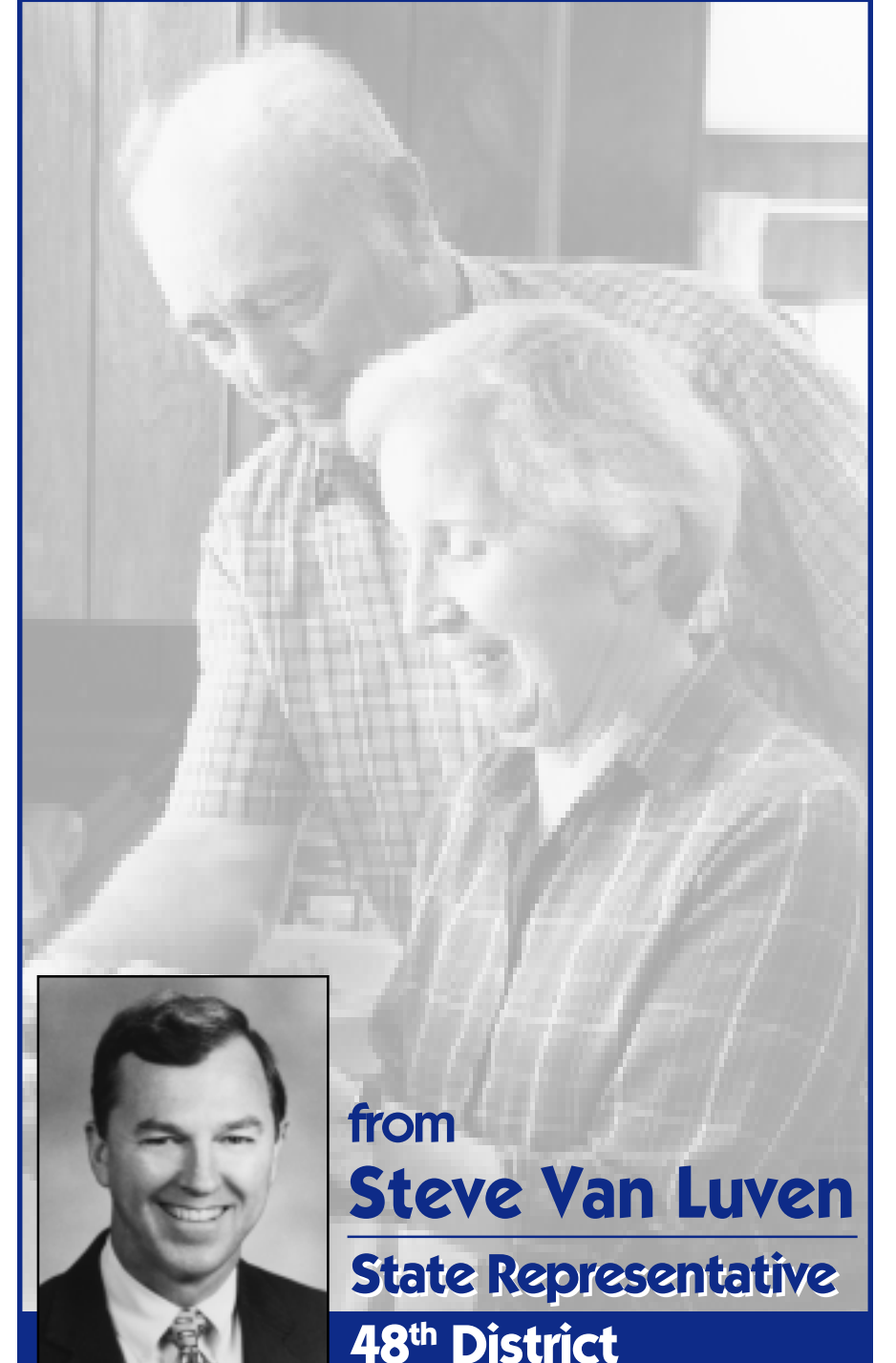
BULK RATE  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit #92  
Olympia, Washington

## Legislative Report to Senior Citizens

**Rep.**  
**Steve Van Luven**  
330 O'Brien Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



# Legislative Report to Senior Citizens



from  
**Steve Van Luven**  
**State Representative**  
**48<sup>th</sup> District**

# Health care

From talking to seniors in the 48th District, I know that health care is a big concern. This year the Legislature took steps to improve the quality and availability of care, especially long-term care. People over 85 need long-term care services the most, and their population is expected to double in the next 10 years. So our health care system must keep up with the changing needs of our seniors.

Here's a summary of what the Legislature did this year to make sure seniors receive quality care:

- **Giving seniors better access to supplemental insurance.**

Medicare clients have two options for their health coverage: They can choose Medicare “Part A” — which offers catastrophic coverage — and also buy supplemental Medicare insurance (known as “Medigap”) for services such as prescription drugs and hospitalization. Or they can purchase a Medicare managed care plan. Unfortunately, problems in the insurance market have led some health plans to stop offering coverage. A glitch in current law has made it difficult for seniors who lose their managed care plans to purchase Medigap policies that are similar to their previous plans and meet their health needs. A new law we passed allows clients to purchase a Medigap policy of their choice if they lose their current managed care health plan.

- **Improving the quality of in-home care services.**

Another new law improves oversight of in-home care providers. It requires Department of Social and Health Services case managers to keep track of the care each client receives, and to share information with the client's doctor and provider. The department can terminate contracts if a provider is not performing well or is jeopardizing the health, safety or well-being of its clients.

- **Protecting vulnerable adults.**

Over the past several years, the Legislature has taken steps to protect vulnerable adults who need long-term care. The law we passed this year creates a single definition of “vulnerable adult” so the laws already in place are easier to enforce.

We also proposed **eliminating the sales tax on all over-the-counter medications**, but that plan did not pass the House and Senate. Senior citizens would have benefitted a great deal from this tax cut. I'm sorry it didn't pass, and I hope we can approve a similar tax cut next year.

# Senior issues in the budget

The two-year budget we passed earlier this year increases funding for a variety of senior health care services. You should know that I voted against the final version of the budget because it spends far too close to the spending limit, and doesn't give tax relief to Washingtonians. I did support another version of the budget that included money for seniors, health care, education, and many other services, but that spent taxpayer dollars more responsibly and included tax cuts.

I'm very happy, however, with the way we funded senior programs. Here's a summary:

- **Aging and Adult Services** - 10.4 percent increase
- **Volunteer services** - 25 percent increase
- **Aging and Adult case management** - the ratio of case managers to clients is reduced from one for every 100 to one for every 85
- **In-home care workers** - Wage increase of 50 cents an hour this year and 50 cents an hour next year
- **Community residential providers** - To keep up with increases in boarding home license fees, we gave a two-percent yearly increase to medical providers, and allocated about \$2 million to make up for the minimum wage hike.
- **Nursing homes** - We provided \$41.6 million for nursing homes, and gave most facilities an increase of about two percent a year. Unfortunately, the pay for nursing home workers is still very low -- something that I would like to see changed.

Overall, we've made progress on senior health care but there's always more to be done. Right now Washington's health insurance market needs serious help. More and more people are losing access to quality, affordable care as insurance companies leave the market. Our health-care policy is on the wrong track — it over-regulates the health insurance market, and raises costs for consumers. Next year I'll work hard to improve the quality and affordability of care for seniors and all Washingtonians.



# SENIOR SERVICES TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Rep. Steve Van Luvén**

In District ..... (425) 453-3037  
Olympia ..... (360) 786-7848

Toll-free Legislative Hotline ..... 1-800-562-6000  
(For hearing impaired) TTY-TDD ..... 1-800-635-9993

Aging Program ..... (206) 296-5216  
Alzheimer's Association of Puget Sound ..... 1-800-848-7097  
Basic Health Plan of Washington State ..... 1-800-826-2444  
Bellevue Multi-Service Centers ..... (425) 747-4826  
Bellevue Food Bank ..... (425) 747-4826  
Car Pool and Van Pool ..... (206) 625-4500  
Community Transit ..... (425) 353 7433  
Community Information and Referrals ..... (206) 461-3200  
Eastside Adult Day Center ..... (425) 867-1779  
Eastside Salvation Army ..... (425) 454-4568  
Eastside Legal Assistance Program ..... (425) 861-7033  
Eastside Community Health Center ..... (425) 882-1697  
Emergency Feeding Program ..... (425) 562-0698  
Food Lifeline/Second Harvest ..... (425) 545-6600  
King County Assessor ..... (206) 296-5195  
Metro ..... (206) 553-3000  
North Bellevue Community Senior Center... (425) 452-7681  
Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens ..... (206) 448-9646  
Redmond Food Bank ..... (425) 882-0241  
Senior Services of King County/  
Volunteer Transportation ..... (206) 448-5740  
Senior Citizen Services ..... (425) 739-4578  
Senior Information and Assistance ..... (206) 448-3110  
Senior Services of King County/  
Rights Assistance ..... (206) 448-5720  
Violent Crime Victims ..... 1-800-346-7555